Marked Loss in Qur'an Translation
The Translatability of Sound-Meaning Conflation

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Abstract: *Markedness is a linguistic phenomenon which permeates the whole spectrum of linguistic phenomena. Given its pervasive nature and the many areas of interest it puts at the researcher's disposal, markedness is well researched by linguists of all backgrounds and disciplines. It has also had its share of study by translation researchers. However, little attention has been paid to this phenomenon in Qur'an translation in spite of its ubiquity. This article discusses and identifies markedness in the Qur'an in detail, and how it bears on the translator's task. No claim is made of exhaustiveness; it only explores a single linguistic phenomenon, namely, sound-meaning conflation. It lends its significance as do all probes into markedness, to the fact that it explores not only what is said but, more importantly, how it is said.*

Keywords: *Markedness, Qur'an translation, sound-meaning conflation, loss and compensation, Qur'anic discourse.*

1. INTRODUCTION: MARKEDNESS EXPLORED :

Markedness, or 'non-ordinariness' of language use, occurs when language users opt for a less common linguistic variant instead of the more commonplace, widely used 'standard' one. This is choosing a form or meaning that is less 'normal' than a comparable form or meaning potentially available in a comparable context. While this is a conscious choice made by language users for different reasons, the aim of heightening the effect of the utterance is an important outcome. Non-standard use will make a certain instance of language usage stand out, thus serving the rhetorical purpose of the user more befittingly. According to Hume (2011), this is ascribable to the very nature of markedness as it carries the characteristics found in table 1 below:

Table1. *Markedness Descriptors, after Hume (2011: 80)*

Unmarked	*Marked*
Natural	Less natural
Normal	Less normal
General	Specialized
Simple	Complex
Inactive	Active
more frequent	Less frequent
Optimal	Less optimal
Predictable	Unpredictable
Acquired earlier	Acquired later
More phonetically variable	Less phonetically variable
Articulatorily simple	Articulatorily difficult
Perceptually weak	Perceptually strong
Universal	Language-specific
Ubiquitous	Parochial

Marked language use stands out because it takes place on the fringes of the sphere of possible language usage patterns:
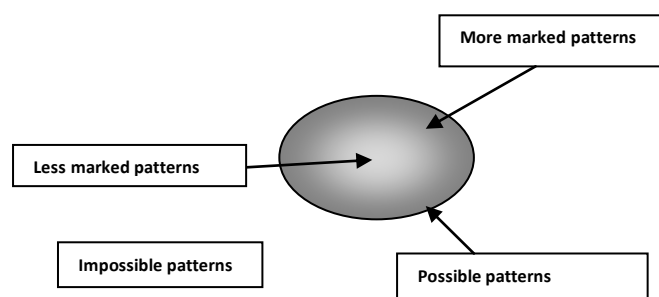
Figure1. *Language patterns, after Hume (2011: 83)*

In general, marked use of language occurs less frequently and is more complex than its unmarked or less marked counterpart. As a linguistic variable, markedness can be present at any level of language – the word, the clause or the level of text structure.

Qualities such as 'interestingness' or 'disturbingness' strike us as elements of linguistic expression which the human mind tends to recognize almost universally despite the different guises which these elements take on in the process of communication. That is, in all languages and cultures, and in a variety of ways, people tend to recognize what stands out as unusual. This makes a strong case for the need to preserve such effects in translation (Hatim 2004, 239). Researchers in the field of translation have not been oblivious to this issue. Among others , Dressler (1990), Guo Jin (1991), Taboada (1995), Mason (1998), Al-Qinai (1999), Farghal (2003), Hatim (2004), Battat (2004), Nae (2004), Grošelj (2004), Guojin (2005), Barzegar (2012), and Elimam (2013). A cursory look at the studies listed here shows the diverse perspectives from which researchers in the field have dealt with the issue of markedness[1]. However, the thread that ties all these views together is described by Hatim (2004) as follows:

Linguistic markedness examined as part of the wider issue of dealing with 'style' in translation or the need to translate not only 'what' is said, but also 'how' it is said. (2004, 229)

The manner in which things are said has its own undeniable impact on meaning and must be accounted for during translation. The question which presents itself is whether a given instance of linguistic markedness is evaluative (i.e. contextually motivated and functional) or is it merely a systemic matter opted for almost by default, and therefore unworthy of the text receiver's attention?

Bearing this in mind, this paper deals with the issue of markedness as used in the translation of the Qur'an. Since this is a potentially very wide area of research, only one linguistic aspect will be dealt with in detail: when sound and meaning are inseparably combined to form a joint whole. This is termed here "sound-meaning conflation." Even this phenomenon will mainly be studied at the word level, with a few examples of larger structures. Recently, Ahmad Eliman (2013) studied marked word order in the Qur'an and how it is treated in translation. It remains to be said that the ground is ripe for further research.

2. MARKEDNESS IN THE QUR'AN:

Arguably, the whole of the Qur'an is marked; otherwise, how would it so resolutely defy the masters of Arabic at their prime to come up with something like it? The inimitability of the Qur'an, known as *iᶜjāz al-Qur'ān* [lit. the miraculous nature of the Qur'an], entails that the Qur'an itself presents a challenge for its recipients, which is repeated varyingly a number of times, to come up with something like it or even a single chapter (*sūrah*) of it.[1] This challenge culminates in the following Qur'anic declaration: *"Say, 'Even if all mankind and jinn came together to produce something like this Qur'an, they would not produce anything like it, however much they helped each other"* (17: 88; trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem). It is quite telling to note that this challenge was posed to a people who were the acknowledged masters of the art of oratory and rhetoric, poetry, prose, rhyming prose and soothsaying more than 1400 years ago. Armstrong (1994, 168) described the effect of the Qur'an on its immediate recipients in the following terms:

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[1]Indeed, owing to the pervasiveness and large-scale usage of the term, it has been suggested that a replacement for it should be found. SeeHaspelmath (2006).

The early biographers of Muhammad constantly described the wonder and shock felt by the Arabs when they heard the Koran for the first time. Many were converted on the spot, believing that God alone could account for the extraordinary beauty of the language. Frequently a convert would describe the experience as a divine invasion that tapped buried yearnings and released a flood of feelings. Muslims like Umar seem to have experienced a similar unsettling of sensibility, an awakening and a disturbing sense of significance which enabled them to make the painful break with the traditional past. Even those Qurayshis who refused to accept Islam were disturbed by the Koran and found that it lay outside all their familiar categories: it was nothing like the inspiration of the *kahins* [soothsayers] or the poet; nor was it like the incantations of a magician. Some stories show powerful Qurayshis who remained steadfastly with the opposition being visibly shaken when they listened to a sura…. Without this experience of the Koran, it is extremely unlikely that Islam would have taken root.

Having said this, one could argue with equal validity that some of the Qur'an must be more marked than the rest. Otherwise, how would the act of communication be possible in the first place without the addressee being familiar with what he/she is being addressed with? What is marked in the Qur'an is how certain familiar linguistic instances have been presented in a way that makes them strike the receiver as non-ordinary. The Qur'an is studded with hundreds, if not thousands, of such instances.

3. SOUND-MEANING CONFLATION IN THE QUR'AN: A MARKED PHENOMENON :

Sound-meaning conflation (lit. *tatābuq al-sawt wa al-ma*^c*nā*; technically, *al-jars*) is a fairly recurrent phonic/semantic feature of the Qur'anic diction. The interdependency of sound and meaning in the Qur'anic text, beginning from the level of the lexeme (isolated words) up to entire *suras* (or textemes), is employed to achieve maximum effect on the psyche of the listener: "*God has sent down the most perfect discourse: a Book concordant and recapitulating. At the mention of it the skins of those who fear their Lord shudder, but then their skins and hearts grow soft at the remembrance of God*" (Q 39:23, trans. Khalidi). This feature demonstrates a level of familiarity with the inner dialectic of the Arabic tongue that cannot be captured by the foreignness of translation and translated texts. It is but one aspect of what is invariably lost in Qur'an translation. Such finesse of style and diction is what compelled the masters of Arabic—at the zenith of their linguistic prowess—to throw their hands up and cry out in despair, when their emissary to the Prophet returned having heard the opening verse of the chapter *Fussilat* and declared: "By God! I heard a speech the like of which I never heard ever before. By God! It is neither poetry nor magic nor soothsaying. By God! His speech will surely have a tremendous impact" (al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, XIII, 80). This was in spite the fact that they were the foremost *shāni'ūn* (extreme haters) of the Messenger and his Message.

3.1. Sound-Meaning Conflation In Arabic

This feature has been treated in Arabic linguistics. Linguists as early as al-Khalīl ibn Ahmad al-Farāhīdī (d. 789) and Sībawayh (d. 796) drew attention to it. In his seminal work, *al-Khasā'is*, Ibn Jinnī (d. 1008) has a chapter on it titled "*Bābun fī imsās al-alfāẓ ashbāh al-ma*^c*ānī*" ("Chapter on vocabulary invoking the likes of meanings"). In it, he says:

Let it be known to you that this is a worthy and subtle topic. Attention has been drawn to it by al-Khalīl and Sībawayh and the [scholarly] community received it with acceptance and consensus on its soundness. Al-Khalīl said: "As if they [the Arab linguistic community] sensed elongation in the sound of the grasshopper and they called it: s*arra*. And they sensed intermission in the sound of the eagle and they called it: s*arsar*". Sībawayh said about the infinitives that are moulded on the pattern of *fa*^c*alān*: "They signify unsettlement and movement, e.g. *naqazān* (hopping), *ghalayān* (boiling) and *ghathayān* (nausea). They matched the succession of sounds in the word [**fa-^ca-lān**] with the pattern of the action". (Ibn Jinnī, II, 152)

In fact, Ibn Jinnī's attentive study does not stop at what he heard from his masters but he comes up with his own examples. He says:

I found many examples of the kind they give. For instance, one would find that infinitives with four-letter roots,which are disyllabic with one syllable repeated twice, signify recurrence, e.g. *za^cza^cah* (turbulence), *qalqalah* (unrest), s*alsalah* (clanging), *qa^cqa^cah* (jingling), *jarjarah* (dragging), *qarqarah* (chatter). (Ibid., 153).

3.2. Sound-meaning Conflation in the Qur'an

In the exegetical corpus, the issue has only fairly recently been given the attention it deserves: in the works of contemporary writers such as al-Tāhir ibn ^cĀshūr (d. 1973) and, more importantly, Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966) on *al-taswīr al-fannī* (artistic depiction) in the Qur'an, Fadil al-Sāmarrā'ī in his *Min Jamāliyyat al-Mufradah al-Qur'āniyyah* (*The Beauty of Qur'anic Lexical Units*), and ^cAbdul-Fattāh Lāshīn in his *Min Asrār al-Ta^cbīr fī al-Qur'an* (*Secrets of Expression in the Qur'an)*. In Qur'anic studies proper, it is also a fairly recent topic of interest. Neither al-Zarkashī (d. 1388) nor al-Suyūtī (d. 1505) directly touched upon the subject in their otherwise comprehensive works. It is studied in the guise of what is known as *al-jars* (sound and/or sound and movement, see Ibn Manzūr; al-^cAtawī, 479-492; al-Mat^cānī, 262-263). Lashin points out the following argument about the topic at hand:

> Sounds differ in their forcefulness and weakness and their ring and tone. Corollary to this is the difference in the words they make up—the way they hit the ear, their ability to carry on meaning and their accentuation of certain emotions and feelings. Soft sounds, which have a quiet ring, instil calmness, while hard sounds are appropriate for situations of rebuke and reproach and elongated sounds are appropriate for counsel and guidance.

3.3. Sound-Meaning Conflation At Word Level

It is at the word level that sound-meaning conflation is most evident. In some instances it teeters on the verge of outright onomatopoeia as for example in: "…a wind in which there is s*irr*" (Q 3:117) and: "…a wind, s*arsar*, excessively heavy…"(Q69:6)

In other cases, it has more to do with the structure of sounds and how they are deployed in the word. *Yatamattā* (strutting his stuff) as in: "…then he [the Denier] returned to his folks *yatamattā*" (Q 75:33), where the full-bodiedness of the sounds and the gemination of the /t/ sound followed by the long vowel /ā/ give the word an elongated character mimicking the haughty posture and arrogant walk of the self-infatuated. This is in stark contrast to the suddenness of the act of falling as fittingly captured and mimicked by the word *kharra* (Q 17:107, 22:31, 25:73, 34:14)which is like s*irr*: short, fast, and sudden. Other words of this nature include: *tatrā* (Q 23:44) in reference to the large number of Messengers sent to the different nations and were denied, *midrārā* (Q 6:6, 11:52, 71:11) highlighting the abundance of the downpour of rain from the sky, *naddākhtān* (Q 55:66) of the two springs gushing forth with water in Paradise, and *rahwan* (Q44:24) of the calm and sedate state in which Moses is ordered to leave the sea which was soon to devour Pharaoh and his soldiers. Further examples include: *jithiyyā* (Q 19:68, 19:72) referring to the humiliating kneeling stance the Deniers and the Devils will be reduced to in the Hellfire, *nazzā^cah* (Q 70:16) highlighting the act of the Hellfire which rips off repeatedly and wilfully the entrails of those who are doomed to fall in it, *yastarikhūna* (Q 35:37) which hauntingly captures the terrifying shrieks of the denizens of Hellfire, *iththāqala* (Q 9:38) which describes the heaviness with which some among the Believers rise to the call of Jihad. Nevertheless, this correlation brings words to life through scene depiction. Consider the following analysis:

Table2. *Semantic structure analysis of some phonically-semantically signifying Qur'anic words*

Lexeme	Referential meaning	Phonic meaning	Scene depiction
iddā (Q 19: 89)	Horribly enormous: monstrous, gross, hideous, atrocious, disastrous.	The plosive sound /d/ is geminated (repeated), to affirm the completeness of the closure of the vocal tract and the suddenness and forcefulness of its release. Equally critical is the employment of the	This verb/action is used in the Qur'an for the claim that God has a son (19: 89). The *ayah*that follows (19: 90) says that because of this explosive claim the skies are about to crack, the earth to split, and the mountains

		open, long vowel /ā/. This gives added power to the unhindered release of the plosive sound. Taken in context, the long vowel /ā/ is followed, as in 19: 89, by nunation making the word sound /iddan/ thus mimicking the sound of explosion to an almost onomatopoeic extent.	to crumble, creating a scene of the aftermath of an explosion on a mammoth scale.
da^{cc}a (Q, 52: 13)	To shove: push forcibly/harshly someone who is stumbling.[2]	The prominent phonic feature in this lexeme is the gemination of the voiced, pharyngeal emphatic[3] /ع/ (graphically represented as superscripted cas ع). Thus used, this sound in Arabic underlines repulsiveness and harshness.	Both instances in which *da^{cc}a* is employed in the Qur'an are depictions of harsh and repulsive actions. In (52:13) it is said of the treatment of the Deniers, when they will be paralyzed by the overwhelming sight of Hellfire that they will be forcibly, harshly shoved into it. In the same vein, 107: 2 talks about the repulsive actions of the Deniers whoforcibly, harshly shove away helpless, begging orphans.

In order to study this phenomenon thoroughly, the word *zaḥzaḥa* has been selected In this context. Any of the proposed words could have been analyzed in the same manner.

4. Zaḥzaḥa and Italicized

The lexical item *zaḥzaḥa*, to be precise the passive voice of it, *zuḥziḥa*, occurs twice in the Qur'an: as *bi-muzaḥziḥi-hī*, removing him (2:96) and *zuḥziḥa*, he was removed (3:185). In both instances, it means being barely spared and dragged away from something undesirable, i.e. retribution in the first reference and the Hellfire in the second.

What follows is an analysis of this lexical item. To do justice to the topic at hand, 3:185 will be dealt with exclusively, yet needless to say 2:96 could have been just as manageable. However, in 3:185, the item is freer from inflectional additions and thus more ripe and suitable for analysis.

4.1. Original

The (aya / verse) in which *zuḥziḥa* to be found is:

الجَنَّةَ وَأُدْخِلَ النَّارِ عَنِ زُحْزِحَ فَمَن ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ يَوْمَ أُجُورَكُمْ تُوَفَّوْنَ وَإِنَّمَا ٱلْمَوْتِ ذَآئِقَةُ نَفْسٍ كُلُّ.

الغُرُورِ مَتَٰعُ إِلَّا الدُّنْيَآ الحَيَوٰةُ وَمَا فَآزَ فَقَدْ

4.2. Exegesis

The scene depicted here is macabre indeed. It is a summation of the journey of human life succinctly put in quite terse terms. The culmination of life is death, which is feared by people and is simply told here in a statement of a fact. God is telling people to be mindful of this and reminds them of the true nature of this life: متاع الغرور, i.e. an illusory enjoyment. The wider picture which

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[2]C.f. al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahanī (1992).

[3]C.f. Crystal's *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*.

is formulated through the immediate context of this *āyah* further underscores its meaning: it is the sub-theme, mindfulness of death, to be found in *sūrahĀlᶜImrān*in verses 181-186.

4.3. Lexical and Phonetic Analysis

Classical Arabic lexicographic sources[4] state that *zaḥzaḥa* means to draw, drag, pull away. The sound and meaning of this lexical item are also conflated. It is not exactly an onomatopoeic word but the sound is certainly taken from the action. The sound-structure of the word is representative of the meaning. In other words, the sound of the word represents the action signified by it. The word is two syllabic: the sound *zaḥ* is repeated twice to make a meaningful word, sounding /*zaḥ-zaḥ*/. This sound /*zaḥ*/ is most likely to be emitted in an effort to pull or push something heavy. In fact, closely related Arabic words, most conspicuously *zaḥara,zaḥīr, zuḥār*and *zuḥārah*, mean emitting a sound like that of breath with the sound of moaning as in the actions of pushing or pulling.[5] This is befitting as two consonants in *zaḥ*, /z/ and /ḥ/ are fricative, regardless of the inevitable short vowel /a/ in between them which is necessary for easing the flow of air in order to move from one consonant to the other. The adjective, fricative, in phonology refers to the manner of articulation of consonants in which the sounds are made when two organs come so close together that the air moving between them produces an almost audible friction. The /ḥ/ sound is not found in English but can be phonetically described as a voiceless, pharyngeal fricative. It can be likened to the sound produced while blowing deep throat into one's hands in order to warm them. Fricatives have the potential of lasting for a considerable duration thus they work in easing pressure while pushing or pulling, and, at the same time, the passage of the air is narrowed so as to accommodate the force being exerted. This manner of articulation is normally employed when undertaking an action involving bodily strain. This is coupled with the repetition of the same syllable twice to make up this word. Al-Rāzī and al-Zamakhsharī in their Qur'an commentaries are of the opinion that *zaḥ-zaḥa* are a doubling of *zaḥḥa*, which means dragging quickly. Classical Arabic maintains as a rule that addition in structure indicates addition in meaning.[6] Thus *zaḥzaḥa* equals *zaḥḥa* twice repeated: dragging something quickly in two installments. Consequently, it could be safe to say that *zaḥ-zaḥ* directly reproduces the action to which it refers. Moreover, there is an element of pictorial depiction in the represented action: the act of dragging an inanimate, or still with fear, object. Sayyid Quṭb,[7] one of the most attentive Qur'an commentators to such meanings, sets the scene in the following terms:

> The word *zuḥziḥa* embodies its meaning within its own sound, draws its form and throws its shadow. So much as Hellfire possesses gravity, dragging to it whoso gets near, this person is in need of someone to drag him [*yu-zaḥziḥ-uhu*] little by little to set him free from its power-draining gravity. Whoso is dragged away from its radius, and be freed from the tentacles of its gravity and admitted to Paradise, has triumphed.

> This is a powerful depiction and a scene in which the movement of pulling and dragging away is brought to life. Truly the fact of the matter is such. Hellfire has gravity! Has not sin got its own gravity? Is not the soul in need of someone to drag it away [*yu-zaḥziḥ-uhā*] from the lure and gravity of sin. Oh yes! This is in fact dragging it [*zaḥzaḥat-uhā*] from Hellfire. Doesn't man, despite constant vigilance, remain unfulfilling of his duties, unless he is saved by the grace of God? Oh yes! This is the dragging away [*zaḥzaḥah*] from the Hellfire, when God reaches out for man with His grace and drags him away from Hellfire.[My translation]

4.4. Translation Analysis

3:185 has been variously translated as follows:

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[4]Prominently the two authoritative Arabic lexicons, *Lisān al-ᶜArab* by Ibn Manẓūr and *Tāj al-ᶜArūs* by al-Zabidī.

[5]C.f. Edward Lane's *Lexicon* under زحر.

[6]The rule is: المعنى زيادة على تدل المبنى زيادة.

[7]Sayyid Quṭb's *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān* (*In the Shades of the Quran*), p. 539.

Table3. *English Translations of 3: 185*

No.	Translator	English Rendition
1.	A.J. Arberry	Every soul shall taste death; and you shall surely be paid in full your wages on the Day of Resurrection. Whosoever is **removed** from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, shall win the triumph. The present life is but the joy of delusion.
2.	Abdalhaqq and Aisha Bewley	Every self will taste death. You will be paid your wages in full on the Day of Rising. Anyone who is **distanced** from the Fire and admitted to the Garden has triumphed. The life of this world is just enjoyment of delusion.
3.	Abdullah Yusuf Ali	Every soul shall have a taste of death: And only on the Day of Judgment shall you be paid your full recompense. Only he who is **saved far** from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have attained the object (of Life): For the life of this world is but goods and chattels of deception.
4.	al-Hilali and Khan	Everyone shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is **removed away** from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception (a deceiving thing).
5.	Free Minds	Every soul will taste death, and you will be recompensed your dues on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever is **swayed** from the Fire and entered into Paradise, he has indeed won. This worldly life is nothing more than the enjoyment of vanity.
6.	George Sale	Every soul shall taste of death, and ye shall have your rewards on the day of resurrection; and he who shall be **far removed** from hell fire, and shall be admitted into paradise, shall be happy: But the present life is only a deceitful provision.
7.	J.M. Rodwell	Every soul shall taste of death: and ye shall only receive your recompenses on the day of resurrection. And whoso shall **scape**[8] the fire, and be brought into Paradise, shall be happy. And the life of this world is merely a cheating fruition!
8.	M.A.S Abdel Haleem	Every soul will taste death and you will be paid in full only on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever is **kept away** from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have triumphed. The present world is nothing only an illusory pleasure.
9.	Malik	Every soul shall have the taste of death: And only on the Day of Judgment shall you be paid your full recompense. Only he who is **saved far** from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have succeeded: For the life of this world is but goods and chattels of deception.
10.	Muhammad Ali	Every soul will taste of death. And you will be paid your reward fully only on the Resurrection day. Then whoever is **removed far** from the Fire and is made to enter the Garden, he indeed attains the object. And the life of this world is nothing but a provision of vanities.
11.	MuhammdAsad	Every human being is bound to taste death: but only on the Day of Resurrection will you be requited in full [for whatever you have done] - whereupon he that shall be **drawn away** from the fire and brought into paradise will indeed have gained a triumph: for the life of this world is nothing but an enjoyment of self-delusion.
12.	Pickthall	Every soul will taste of death. And ye will be paid on the Day of

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[8]Note that it is part of the translator's strategy to use archaic English. In this case, 'scape' was in circulation in Middle English according to *OED*.

		Resurrection only that which ye have fairly earned. Whoso is **removed** from the Fire and is made to enter paradise, he indeed is triumphant. The life of this world is but comfort of illusion.
13.	Qaribullah and Darwish	Every soul shall taste death. You shall be paid your wages in full on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever is **removed** from Hell and is admitted to Paradise shall prosper, for the worldly life is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion.
14.	QXP	Every living being shall have to taste death. On the Resurrection Day you shall be paid in full what you have earned. Whoever is **drawn away** from the Fire, and gets admitted to Paradise, will have gained supreme triumph. Those who consider the life of the world as the end in itself should know that it is only a comfort of self-deception.
15.	R. Khalifa	Every person tastes death, then you receive your recompense on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever **misses Hell, barely**, and makes it to Paradise, has attained a great triumph. The life of this world is no more than an illusion.
16.	S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali	Every self tastes death; and verily you shall be paid in full your recompenses on the Day of Resurrection; and whoso is **removed away** from the (*Hell)* fire and admitted into Paradise, has indeed gained his object; and the life of this world is not, but a provision of vanity.
17.	Umm Muhammad (Saheeh International)	Every soul shall have the taste of death: And only on the Day of Judgment shall you be paid your full recompense. Only he who is **saved far** from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have succeeded: For the life of this world is but goods and chattels of deception.
18.	Sarwar	Every soul is destined to experience the agony of death. You (Muslims) will receive the recompense for your deeds on the Day of Judgment. To be **saved** from the fire and admitted to Paradise is certainly a great triumph. The worldly life is no more than a deceitful possession.
19.	Shakir	Every soul shall taste of death, and you shall only be paid fully your reward on the resurrection day; then whoever is **removed far away** from the fire and is made to enter the garden he indeed has attained the object; and the life of this world is nothing but a provision of vanities.
20.	Sher Ali	Every soul shall taste of death. And you shall be paid in full your rewards only on the Day of Resurrection. So whosoever is **removed away** from the Fire and is made to enter Heaven has indeed attained his goal. And the life of this world is nothing but an illusory enjoyment.
21.	Thomas Cleary	Every being experiences death. And you will only be paid your due on the day of resurrection. And whoever is **kept away** from the fire and admitted to the garden has gained salvation. And the life of this world is just the stuff of vain hopes.

Table 3 above shows a representative sample of Qur'an translations in English. This is a cross-section of 21 Qur'an translations dating from 1734, when Sale's translation was first produced, up until 2006, when Free Minds produced their translation. It also encompasses a wide spectrum of linguistic, cultural and theological backgrounds: Arabs and non-Arabs, Muslims and non-Muslims, native speakers of English and non-native speakers, literalists and meaning- oriented traditionalists and non-traditionalists. The wide selection is deliberate. The sampling has to be comprehensive to do justice to the study of markedness translation in the Qur'an.

Table 4 below classifies these renditions according to how much of the meaning they managed to retain.

Table4. *English renditions of zuḥziḥa classified*

Sound-meaningful	Scene-setting	Meaningful
≈	Swayed *Free Minds*	Distanced *Bewley*
	Drawn away *QXP, Muhammad Asad*	Far removed *Sale*
	Misses Hell, barely *Khalifa*	Kept away *Abdel Haleem, Cleary*
		Removed *Pickthal, Arberry*
		Removed away *Hilali and Khan, Mir Ahmed Ali, Sher Ali*
		Removed far *Muhammad Ali*
		Removed far away *Shakir*
		Saved far *Yusuf Ali, Malik, Saheeh*
		Saved from *Sarwar*
		Scape *Rodwell*

The translations are tabulated in three columns. The first column, *sound-meaningful,* is for the translations that managed to capture the meaning as well as the sound of the original in the manner spelled out in section '*4.3Lexical analysis*' above. The second column, *scene-setting,* lists the translations that manage to capture a scene comparable to that of the original, but not the sound or the exact meaning. The third column, *meaningful*, lists the translations that were only successful in replicating the bareones meaning.

The table above shows that no rendition qualified for the first column, while four out of 21 managed to draw a mental picture, and 17 out of 21 achieved a rendition of the overall meaning. Naturally, there are variations within each column: for instance, in the second column, Muhammad Asad's *drawn away* comes much closer to the original than Free Minds' *swayed* or Khalifa's *misses, Hell, barely*. Similarly, in the third column, the very safe *distanced* or *removed* is closer to the original than *saved,* which carries only rudiments of the intended meaning. Asad's attempt is the closest of all 21 translations, but even it fails to capture the phonic element of the original.

The question arising from this is: what is lost, and is it inevitable? What is at stake here is that the semantic content is intertwined with the sound of *zuḥziḥa*. That is to say, the act of dragging is expressed not only by the letters of the word but also by the fricative sounds invested in it, and by the wealth of associative, like-sounding words in the Arabic language. Moreover, the figurative dimension of the word makes the whole scene quite realistic and heightens its effect. Thus, loss is not only applicable to the formal aspect of the translation but also to a large part of the meaning. As is evident from table 4, some translators did indeed lose more of the meaning than others. This is analogous to replacing emotive words like *budge*, *ram* and *thrust* with their plain synonyms *move*, *drive into* and *push*, respectively. The action associated with the sound is, to say the least, relegated to the background. However, one has to acknowledge the fact that maintaining such an effect on the hearer is likely to be lost within the same linguistic/phonological boundary, as in the case of paraphrasing for instance, let alone when jumping across linguistic and cultural fault lines. However, can we really contend, that in such cases, very little can be saved other than the referential meaning or is the issue in need of further probing?

5. LOSS AND COMPENSATION IN TRANSLATION

In order to explore the issue of the translatability of the Qur'an further, the notions of loss and gain in translation will be discussed below.

A translator compensates if he "offsets an evitable loss at one point in the text at another point, achieving a compensatory translation gain" (Hatimand Munday 2004, 31). Baker (1992, 78) sees compensation as applicable to "any loss of meaning, emotional force, or stylistic effect which may not be possible to reproduce directly at a given point in the target text." Similarly, New mark (1988, 90) opines that compensation "is said to occur when loss of meaning, sound-effect, metaphor or pragmatic effect in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part, or in a contiguous sentence."How ever, one might rightly find that these definitions and usage of the term are far too general, and that what is lacking in the discussion of compensation, as Hervey et al (1995, 66) point out, is a descriptive framework for the processes it entails.

Hervey and Higgins (1992, 24) manage to formulate such a framework. Their starting point is to draw an analogy from the field of engineering and its concept of energy loss, which is inevitable in the design of machinery. They take the argument a step further and offer a categorization of compensation based on the location of compensation in relation to the location of loss. Following Hervey et al (1995, 82-4), a "parallel" relationship is formulated where compensation occurs at exactly the same place in the target text (TT) as the effect that has been lost in the source text (ST). A "contiguous" relationship formulates where the compensation occurs in the TT within a short distance from the lost effect of the ST. A relationship of "displaced" compensation occurs where the instance of compensation in the TT is a long distance from the ST loss. "Generalized" compensation occurs where the TT includes stylistic features that aim to naturalize the text for the target reader and achieve a comparable number and quality of effects, without these being tied to any specific instance of the ST loss. It goes without saying that these types of compensation might be applied to loss at different levels of textual matrices.

Theoretically speaking, one must agree with the proponents of the view that in many cases, very little can be saved in translation except the semantic content. However, is it really inevitable that the translation of a particular text type (for example, poetry, sensitive texts) be so deeply fraught with the danger of failure? Or can some genuine, creative, and innovative solutions and compensation techniques be found? This remains to be studied further.

In the realm of the translation of the Qur'an, given the magnitude of the task, the translator has to aim for minimizing the degree of loss. As we have seen in the translation of *zuḥziḥa* in table 3,most of the sampled translations barely manage to capture the semantic content of the original, using *remove*, while others—Arberry in particular—used *shall scape*, not even using a compensatory solution, such as the passive voice which is readily available in the repertoire of the target language.

Setting the bar higher and aiming for "parallel compensation" as per Hervey et al's terminology, one might suggest the following for *zuḥziḥa: is heaved away from. Collins Cobuild Advanced Learner's English Dictionary*[9] defines *heave* as, "if you *heave* something heavy or difficult to move somewhere, you push, pull, or lift it using a lot of effort."

The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines it as,"lift or drag (s.th. heavy) with great effort."*Encarta World English Dictionary* defines it asa "move using much effort: to pull, push, lift, or throw something heavy by exerting great physical effort, especially in a concentrated or concerted burst."

A componential analysis of *heave*, culled from these definitions, yields the following results:

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[9] Definitions in this dictionary are based on analysis of an authentic corpus of the English language as used today, gathered and entered in a vast database of 524 million words. This database is known as the Bank of English.
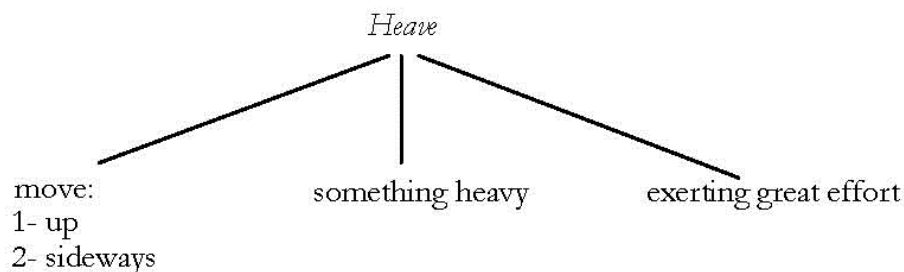
Fig2. *Componential analysis of heave*

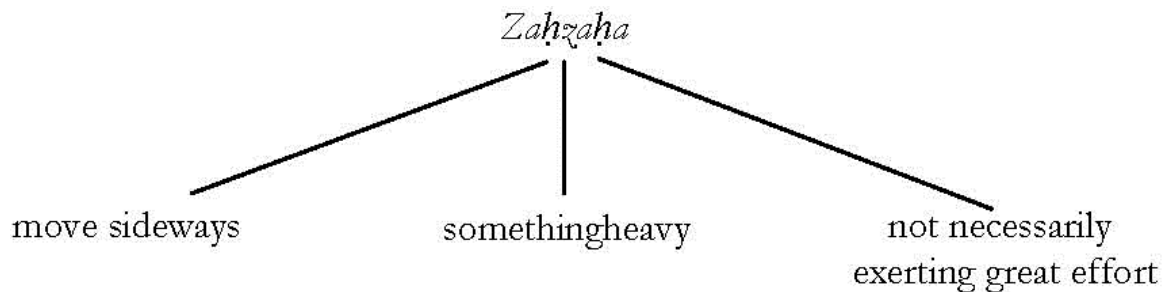On the other hand, zaḥ zahacomponentially analyzed looks like this:

Fig3. *Componential analysis of zaḥzaḥa*

It becomes clear from the componential analysis of both lexemes, that although *zaḥzaḥa* and *heave* are used in their respective languages to express the movement of something from its position with sound and meaning intertwined, there are componential differences between them. If perfect synonymy is illusive intra-lingually, then it is all the more so, inter-lingually.

One may further suggest other ways of parallel compensation, such as using compounds or grammatical qualifiers and modifiers. Such innovative solutions need much creativity on the part of the translator and must be carefully employed so as not to disturb the balance of the meaning or the effect of the whole semantic segment. The case studied here may be considered extreme, as it is indeed marked in Arabic and is therefore all the more confounding to the process of decision making in translation. Regardless of this, the translator must do all that is possible to compensate for loss. The degree of loss is fully realized at the stage of the analysis of the source text and compensated for at the stage of synthesis of the target text.

So far, we have been looking at phonic-semantic features in an isolated lexical element. It could be assumed that compensation at higher levels lends itself more easily to translators, but this is not guaranteed.

6. SOUND-MEANING CONFLATION ABOVE WORD LEVEL

Further manifestations of sound-meaning conflation in the Quran appear beyond single words and encompass a wide range of units, including passages, several passages, and the most distinctive unit of the Quran, the *sūra*. All these examples of sound-meaning conflation employ phonic features such as assonance and alliteration. However, the higher you get, the more subtle the phenomenon at hand becomes. At this level, it is most clearly identified in passages dealing with a particular topic, like that of the threat of retribution or promise of delight, not in the leastaided by the very expressive *fawāṣilQur'āniyyah* (rhyming verse endings), syntactic forms, choice of lexis and clause/sentence structure. The sonority of these passages is vivid. Passage 73:11-19 is an explicit threat of retribution to contemptuous deniers who had everything in life? materially. It opens with the foreboding *dharnī* (leave Me alone) and carries the threat to extreme heights by employing such heart-rending words as: *ankālan* (heavy shackles), *jaḥīman* (blazing fire), *dhā ghuṣṣatin* (choking [food]), *ᶜadhāban alīman* (painful retribution), *tarjufu* (trembles [the Earth]), *kathībanmahīlan* (heap of running sand [mountains]), *akhdhan wabīlan* (brutal seizure), *munfaṭirun* (split [the sky]). Contrary to this, are the sounds employed in the closing verses of az-Zumar (39:69-75). A passage which starts with *wa ashraqat al-arḍu bi-nūri Rabbihā* (and the

land glows with the light of its Lord), and depicts the larger than life scene of the closing hours of the Day of Judgment when the pious are driven in hordes to Paradise (*wa sīqa al-ladhīna t-taqaw Rabbahum ilā l-jannati zumarā*) and the Deniers are driven in hordes to Hellfire (*wasīqa al-ladhīna kafarū ilā jahannama zumarā*), and every soul is given its due in full measure (*wa wuffiya tkullu nafsin bi-mā ᶜamilat*).

This scene is befittingly closed by the sight of the angels hovering around the Throne of their Lord singing His Praises. After the Final Judgment between all creatures has been justly rendered, an unidentified, stately source announces: "Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds", a majestic sound signalling the culmination of all deeds and endeavours, reverberating in eternity.

To give an example, the last chapter in the Qur'an *surah* al-Nās reads:

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاس (١) مَلِكِ النَّاس (٢) إِلَٰهِ النَّاس (٣) مِن شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاس الْخَنَّاس (٤) الَّذِى يُوَسْوِسُ فِى صُدُور النَّاس (٥) مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاس (٦)

[1] Qul aᶜūdhu bi-Rabbi n-Nās. [2] Maliki n-Nās. [3] Ilāhi n-Nās. [4] Min sharri l-waswāsi l-khannās. [5] al-Ladhī yuwaswisu fīṣudūri n-Nās. [6] Min l-jinnati wa n-Nās.

[1] Say, "I seek refuge with the Lord of people, [2] the King of people, [3] the God of people, [4] against the harm of the slinking whisperer— [5] who whispers into the hearts of people— [6] whether they be jinn or people." [trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem]

The theme of the *sūrah* is seeking refuge against the whisperings of the devils, who are inciting people to commit evil deeds. This is reflected in the employment of the hissing sound /s/. To heighten the effect, the /s/ sound is repeated 10 times in this very short *sūrah*, most significantly in the rhyming verse ending, *an-Nās*. Not even an in genious attempt such as Shawkat Toorawa's (2006, 37) manages to echo this sound-meaning conflation:

> [1]**Repeat**: I seek protection with the Lord of *Creation*, [2] Sovereign of *Creation*, [3] God of *Creation*, [4]From the malicious *incantations*[5] Of the Accursed, whispering *insinuations* in the hearts [6] Of Jinn and Humanity both, *fabrications*. [Italics in the original.]

7. CONCLUSION: MARKED PROBLEMS FOR TRANSLATION

The intermixture of sound and meaning in the Qur'an presents markednesspar excellence and poses one of the most insurmountable challenges to translation. A marked use of language occurs when a less frequent and usually more complex lexical or grammatical feature is used instead of a more frequent and usually less complex variant (seeBiberet aland Conolly). The most obvious, and indeed the most natural (cf. al-Ṭabarī), alternative for *ith-thāqaltum* (Q 9:38) is *tathāqaltum*. However, it is quite clear that the alternative does not capture the lethargy and sluggishness which is invested in the Qur'anic word due to the gemination of the /th/ sound followed by the long vowel /ā/. Both take place at the beginning of the word and so appropriately depict the weariness with which they get up. Such language usage is inextricably intertwined with the mentality of Arabic and taps into its huge lexical repertoire. The inter textual ties with other Arabic words are so tight that it at once brings them to the fore of the reader's mind and draws on them in every act of interpretation (semiosis). For translations, this has serious implications and poses problems at both the stages of analysis of the original and synthesis of the translation. Thus, translation becomes a colossal undertaking, threatening to deny non-Arabic readership what they so thoroughly deserve: a glimpse of the genius of the Qur'an, and a chance to appreciate its inimitability. The case is argued here for a level of language intimacy that will never be matched by translation across cultural and linguistic faultlines. Even A.J. Arberry's translation, hailed as "the one which has striven most elegantly to capture the resonance of the original Arabic" (Khalidi, xx), fails in this respect. One very recent English translation, by Tarif Khalid, touches on the problem, although one-dimensionally, in the analysis stage but falls short of expectations in the synthesis of the translation, missing the point that at certain levels, the phonicin particular, languages are different. In his introduction, the translator, Tarif Khalidi (pp. xx-xxi), says:

> The reader will doubtless notice that the 'register' of the Qur'an constantly shifts, from narrative to exhortation, from homily to hymn of praise, from strict law to tender sermon, from fear and trembling to invitation to reflection. These I decided, had to look different; hence the horizontal and vertical disposition of the translation. By and large, where the

Qur'an is narrating or legislating, I have opted for a horizontal prose format. Where it is in any sense 'dramatic', I have arranged the lines in the vertical 'poetic' fashion.

Although given some credence, the topic of how sound affects meaning in the Qur'an is yet to receive the attention it deserves among concerned scholarly circles around the world. Research has to be produced and rules laid down so that both Qur'an translators may not go over sound-meaning conflation without giving it the attention it deserves, and readers not privileged enough to have access to the Arabic original heed/be mindful/be aware of the subtleties of the Qur'an.

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